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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 002912

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/05/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [YM](#) [MARITIME](#) [SECURITY](#) [ENERGY](#)

SUBJECT: MOI ALIMI DISCUSSES OIL TERMINAL SECURITY AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

REF: A. SANAA 01377

[B](#). SANAA YM 071445Z

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas C. Krajewski for reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#). (C) Summary: In a October 3 meeting with Ambassador and Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) Chief, Interior Minister Rashad Alimi discussed security arrangements for the Safer oil terminal and the transfer of protection duties to the Yemen Coast Guard (YCG). Alimi stated that the YCG, a Ministry of Interior (MOI) organization, would not begin continuous patrols until responsibilities were clearly delineated with the Ministry of Defense (MOD), which is currently responsible for protecting the Safer. Ambassador also requested Alimi's support for the installation of a USG-sponsored communications system between MOD and MOI forces involved in counter-terrorism operations. End Summary.

Safer Oil Tanker Security

[2](#). (C) Ambassador opened the meeting with Alimi by inquiring when the YCG would assume primary responsibility for protection of the Safer oil platform, operated by Yemen Hunt Oil. The YCG appears ready to provide increased security patrols, he continued, with the establishment of an operating base in nearby Salif Port. (Note: The Safer is a stationary tanker located 9 kilometers offshore and approximately 35 kilometers north-northwest from Hodeidah Port. The tanker serves as a storage and transfer facility for approximately 30 percent of Yemen's annual oil wealth).

[3](#). (C) Alimi replied that certain issues must be resolved before MOD will allow the Yemen Navy to transfer responsibility for maritime protection of the Safer to the YCG. According to Alimi, MOD believes YCG should also take over coastal land defense from the Yemen Army, which Alimi opposes. Alimi added that additional boats must first be deployed to the Salif base before operations could begin. Even with additional boats, Alimi contended that patrols of the Safer could not begin for another five to six months when rough sea conditions subside.

[4](#). (C) Comment: Protecting the Safer is instrumental to Yemen's economic and political security. It is also the most vulnerable highly profile target in the country. Currently, the Yemen Navy remains responsible for maritime protection of the Safer, but ROYG intends to transfer responsibility to the more capable YCG, which has developed into a professional and capable force with assistance from the Foreign Military Financing program. The transfer had been stalled due to a commercial dispute with a prominent local businessman who was blocking the creation of an operating base (ref A). Even after the issue was resolved in July (ref B), it appears that other obstacles remain. YCG officials informed post earlier that they were willing and able to assume responsibility. Despite Alimi's protestations of rough seas, it appears that the rivalry between MOD and MOI forces is preventing YCG from assuming full control over the Safer's security. End Comment.

Point-to-Point Wireless Communication System

[5](#). (C) Ambassador also requested Alimi's support in completing the point-to-point wireless system that will link MOI and MOD forces involved in counter-terrorism operations. The CJTF-HOA sponsored project will link MOI headquarters, Central Security Forces (an MOI organization that contains Yemen's premier counter-terrorism unit) the YCG, and the Yemen Air Force (which provides helicopter support to MOI forces). Ambassador noted that the hardware had already been installed within the various organizations but stressed that the system would not be operational until post received the necessary approval to install the required connecting fiber optics and antennas. Alimi promised to provide a MOI point of contact to assist in coordinating the approvals.

[6](#). (C) Comment: While all the necessary equipment is already in-country, the project is stalled for reasons that remain unclear. Whatever the source of opposition is within the ROYG, Alimi's support will be crucial for coordinating the

installation with relevant security agencies and President Saleh. MOI's willingness to help secure the necessary approvals is a step forward in installing a communication system that will significantly improve MOI's ability to coordinate counter-terrorism operations. End Comment.
Krajeski